

2003 Children's Services Commission Annual Report

The Children's Services Commission (CSC) was established by the General Assembly in 1983, and exists in accordance with Missouri Revised Statute 210.101 and 210.102. Its purpose is to improve the lives of children by making government work better.

The Commission met nine times in 2003 to discuss and monitor legislation, policies, and programs affecting the well-being of children. This annual report, being filed in accordance with state statutes, summarizes the Commission's activities and accomplishments during the year. These include unanimously-agreed upon recommendations for legislative initiatives, departmental activities as they relate to children, and priorities for 2004.

Membership: The Commission members are drawn from all three branches of government.

Members include the directors of the:

- Department of Corrections
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Department of Health and Senior Services
- Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Social Services

The membership also includes:

- Eight legislators, including two Republicans and two Democrats from each body
- One family court judge
- One juvenile court judge

In addition, two ex-officio members serve on the Commission:

- A liaison from the Governor's staff
- The Children's Trust Fund

Officers:

- Chair: Rep. Vicky Riback Wilson, serving her second term as chair.
- Vice-chair: Sen. Bill Foster, elected in August; Sen. Steve Stoll preceded him in that position.
- Secretary: Gary Kempker, director, Department of Corrections.
- Treasurer: Kent King, director, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Other stakeholders and the public participate through membership on the various subcommittees, presentations to the Commission, and public discussions.

Commission Staff: In order to achieve maximum efficiency, the Commission contracted with the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Social Work to secure the services of one faculty member and one research assistant. In 2003, Anne Dannerbeck, professor and research specialist at MU, and Keely Black, graduate social work student, worked as liaisons and staff for the Commission. Jennie Bedsworth was hired as the 2004 graduate student liaison. These individuals have assisted the Commission and its subcommittees with research, planning, and other tasks as needed.

Website: In 2003, the Commission began development of a website to provide information to the public. The site will inform the public regarding the purpose, mission, and values of the Commission, as well as the valuable work that is presently taking place. It will also include links to relevant research-based information regarding children and their families. Space for the website has been requested with the address:
www.csc.mo.gov

Values and Roles

In August 2003 the Commission held a retreat to discuss and clarify the values and roles of the Commission. With nearly perfect attendance, the following core values and roles were identified to guide and inform the work of the Commission:

- ☑ Our future depends on putting children first and fully investing in their future.
- ☑ The welfare of children is a shared responsibility of parents, families, communities, government and the private sector through coordinated and integrated efforts.
- ☑ Children should be treated with dignity and respect.
- ☑ Children have a right to health, safety, education, permanency, stability, and significant adult support.
- ☑ Families and children have a right and a responsibility to be involved in decisions that affect them.

- ☑ Public policy should be based on sound research, reliable data, and should include an evaluation component.
- ☑ Prevention and early intervention are critical to achieving positive outcomes.

During the retreat, the Commission identified its roles as follows:

- ☑ **Improve government processes**
 - Coordinate services for children and their families.
 - Simplify the systems associated with services for children and their families.
 - Improve the collaboration among state agencies that provide services to children and their families.
 - Increase efficacy and reduce the duplication of services for children and their families.
- ☑ **Advocate for key issues**
 - Initiate and support legislation.
 - Recommend policies.
 - Provide a forum for analysis and discussion of key issues.
- ☑ **Act as a catalyst for change**
 - Facilitate best practices pertaining to services for children and their families.

Commission Subcommittees

In an effort to identify and evaluate current programs and make recommendations on state services that affect children, the Commission formed four subcommittees in 2003. Each subcommittee included stakeholders representing a broad range of interests and backgrounds, with expertise in particular issue areas. The subcommittees focused on the following topics: children's mental health, early childhood, children of incarcerated parents, and parental responsibilities. Throughout the year the subcommittee members researched and discussed relevant issues and policies. This work resulted in formal presentations and recommendations to the Commission.

The Commission extends its grateful appreciation to the subcommittee members for their thorough work, and for their commitment to making the lives of Missouri's children better.

The subcommittee co-chairs were drawn from the public and private sectors:

- Children's Mental Health: Co-chaired by Beth Griffin, Citizens for Missouri's Children, and Linda Roebuck, Department of Mental Health.

- Children of Incarcerated Parents: Co-chaired by Julie Rollins, Department of Corrections, State Representative Danie Moore, and Veronica Stovall, Department of Social Services.
- Early Childhood: Co-chaired by Deborah Scott, Department of Social Services, and Kathy Thornburg, University of Missouri.
- Parental Responsibilities: Co-chaired by Anne Dannerbeck, University of Missouri, and Charles Jackson, Department of Public Safety.

Recommendations

After reviewing and discussing the work and recommendations of each of the subcommittees, the Children's Services Commission recommends the following actions. Only recommendations to which there were no objections, and which were deemed to require immediate action are included herein. Full subcommittee reports are included as appendices at the end of this document.

Absence within this report of any recommendation included in subcommittee reports should in no way be interpreted as opposition to, or lack of interest in, that recommendation.

Children's Mental Health Subcommittee (See Appendix A for subcommittee report)

Recommendation

Develop, promote and pass legislation to establish a comprehensive mental health system for children.

- As recommended by the subcommittee on children's mental health, the Children's Services Commission reiterates endorsement of three major principles:
 1. Expansion of Medicaid services to enable children to live with their families while they receive mental health services.
 2. Designation of the Department of Mental Health to lead the planning process for a comprehensive children's mental health system that will involve all of the departments represented on the CSC.
 3. Designation of the Department of Mental Health and Department of

Social Services to review cases of children in custody. When it is determined that a child has been placed in custody exclusively due to a need for mental health services and where there is no instance of abuse, neglect or abandonment, his or her case may be transferred to a community-based mental health provider, pursuant to judicial approval and a Department of Social Services and Department of Mental Health finance plan.

Early Childhood Subcommittee *(See Appendix B)*

Recommendation

Develop enabling legislation to create, under the auspices of the Children's Services Commission, a formalized body that will coordinate programs and policies aimed at children ages 0-5.

- Because the earliest years of development are the most critical in determining a child's future, Commission members believe that a focus on children from age 0 to 5 is critical, and wish to take advantage of the opportunity in the next year to make a difference during this key stage of development. The body being recommended needs to be established in statute in 2004 in order to take advantage of current opportunities for funding and coordination.
- The Commission agreed that the Department of Health and Senior Services, under the auspices of the Early Childhood Systems grant, will facilitate continued planning for the upcoming year.
- The coordinating body will develop a statewide comprehensive plan to coordinate public and private programs that serve children from ages 0 to 5.
- The Commission anticipates that the work of this body will build upon the work of the early childhood subcommittee as contained in its report in appendix B.

Recommendation

Pursue legislation that will limit the number of children that can be cared for in an unlicensed childcare facility in the state of Missouri.

Recommendation

Promote the requirement that all registered childcare providers must complete basic training in health and safety and subsequently complete a health and safety checklist.

- The Department of Health and Senior Services currently provides this training to all licensed care providers.

Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee (See Appendix C)

Recommendation

Develop a standardized guide for involved parties that covers custody and guardianship issues regarding children of incarcerated parents.

- Such a guide has already been written, reviewed, and approved by the subcommittee, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders.
- The Children's Trust Fund has agreed to provide funding to print the guide.
- The guide will be available on the Commission website.

Recommendation

Recommend guidelines and additional alternative sentencing options for nonviolent offenders.

- The Commission will work with the Sentencing Advisory Commission on alternative sentencing options that focus on the best interests of the child.

Recommendation

Encourage the use of teleconferencing for custodial placement meetings so that incarcerated parents can participate in decision-making processes regarding the future of their child(ren).

- The Department of Public Safety has provided funds for pilot testing teleconferencing at selected sites around the state.
- This recommendation is consistent with the Commission's identified value: *Families and children have a right and a responsibility to be involved in decisions that affect them.*

Parental Responsibilities Subcommittee (Appendix D)

Recommendation

Develop a statewide distribution and access point for information on parenting.

- ParentLink could be the statewide contact point. Parent Link already functions in this role. Recognition from the Commission will allow it to expand its role and facilitate the distribution of information on parenting to all stakeholders.

- A link can be created from the Commission website to Parent Link.

Recommendation

Encourage more innovative distribution of information about parenting programs.

- Explore the use of Extension Resource Centers' video interactivity teleconferencing abilities as one approach to expanding access to parenting programs.
- Promote awareness of parenting information to a broader distribution network including faith-based institutions, hospitals, emergency responders, schools, health departments and other public agency offices.

Recommendation

Better coordinate programs and activities among publicly funded parenting programs.

- Encourage more inter-agency coordination among all branches of government at the state and local level and the Children's Trust Fund in disseminating information on parenting programs.

Priorities and Accomplishments of Member Departments

There are presently eight departments represented on the Commission. The departments report monthly to the Commission regarding their efforts, initiatives, and accomplishments that affect the well-being of children.

Department of Corrections

Director Gary Kempker

The Department of Corrections shares the Commission's concern regarding the impact of incarceration on children and families. The inmate population continues to grow at a rapid rate in Missouri. Offenders that are not successful at re-entry into society are at a high risk to recidivate. This year the "family" was identified as one of the top elements to promote success once an offender is released into the community. Because of this, DOC has prioritized enhancing and maintaining family bonds during the time of incarceration and has been focusing on transition and re-entry initiatives. Efforts to obtain support for transitions issues are ongoing. Julie Rollins, Women's Program Manager for DOC, is leading the re-entry initiatives. Ms. Rollins also co-chaired the subcommittee on Children of Incarcerated Parents.

This year DOC also partnered with several community agencies to submit a federal grant proposal for Mentors of Children of Incarcerated Parents. DOC has also been working to enhance visits between incarcerated mothers and their children by facilitating

therapeutic visits once per month. Mothers and their children can participate in structured activities together.

The Department continues to revise its Department Manual regarding visiting restrictions for children. The Department wants to ensure that all children are safe and protected during visitation.

Department of Economic Development

Director Kelvin Simmons and former Director Joe Driskill

The Department of Economic Development continues to work to ensure a seamless transition to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and ensure that children do not fall through the cracks.

The Department also did a great deal of work this summer regarding disaster recovery, and worked with communities to grant many Neighborhood Assistance Awards.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Director Kent King

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education continues to focus on improving student learning and achievement results. The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all state to analyze student achievement data by demographic subgroups with the goal of closing the achievement gap among all groups of children by 2014. This year DESE reviewed the assessment tools for the No Child Left Behind program, with the implementation for new grade-level assessments being in place by 2006.

Department of Health and Senior Services

Director Dick Dunn

The Department of Health and Senior Services has focused on promoting healthy pregnancies and decreasing infant mortality rates. Infant mortality continues to be an issue for the State of Missouri. A research grant and the Title V Maternal and Child Health block grant have been used to explore indicators related to gynecological health and subsequent infant mortality, especially in the St. Louis city, Kansas City, and Bootheel areas.

DHSS has collaborated with the Department of Mental Health on activities related to suicide prevention. This year DHSS has been training individuals in local communities who interact with children and adolescents to identify those at risk for suicide.

DHSS has also established the Missouri Council on the Prevention and Management of Overweight and Obesity issues. The council will document health implications and the economic impact of obesity on Missouri families. The council will have a final report with recommendations in late 2004.

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Director Catherine Leapheart

In accordance to legislation passed last year, The Department of Labor continues to educate employers of the State about providing safe and healthy work environments for children. Colleen White with the Department submitted the following statement to the Commission on December 22, 2003:

The Division of Labor Standards within the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations is responsible for administration of Missouri's Child Labor Law. To that end, the Division provides outreach and education to employers, school officials, parents, youth and other interested parties about the rights and responsibilities under the law, young worker safety tips, and data on injuries to Missouri's working youth. In FY 03, the Division identified 7,616 violations of the Child Labor Law, and assisted 3,233 youth in remaining safe in Missouri's workplaces. Outreach information was provided to 29,473 entities to assist in educating them about Missouri's protections for working youth. One large success of our outreach efforts resulted in one employer providing employment opportunities for over 1600 youth. In addition, several child labor related publications were translated into Spanish. All publications were made available on the Division's website.

Data on youth workplace injuries comes from reports of claims under Missouri's Workers' Compensation law. This data does not provide information on youth injuries where no workers' compensation claims are filed, or injured youth that are not provided workers' compensation coverage. However, this data is useful to determine injury trends in order to focus our limited resources on better preventive methods of outreach and enforcement. Due to significant changes in the collection of data nationwide from the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) coding system to the use of the North American Industry Classification (NAIC) coding system, there are disparities in comparison of data over the last three years. Future continued use of the new coding system is expected to provide better results. The available data is attached (Appendix F). There is not specific employment data for working youth available to compare to injury data. Therefore meaningful injury rates cannot be determined, which means we cannot determine if injury rates are up or down. However, a success can be noted in the overall downward trend of actual number of youth under 18 injured. The Division will continue to exert our best efforts within our limited resources to assist in keeping Missouri's working youth safe.

Department of Mental Health

Director Dorn Schuffman

The Department of Mental Health has been working with the Office of States Court Administrator and the Children's Division to develop a protocol to implement Senate Bill 923 that was passed last year. In the past, parents have often had to relinquish

custody of their children in order to obtain mental health services. The new protocol will seek to implement a standard system across the state to ensure that all other resources have been exhausted before relinquishing custody occurs. The protocol also ensures that families know whom to contact if they feel they need to relinquish custody in order to receive services for their children.

In addition to developing a protocol for relinquishing custody, DMH has also been working with the Children's Division and the System of Care in Springfield to preserve the family unit. DMH has placed a mental health professional in the Children's Division office in Springfield to be available to Children's Division staff to provide consultation and to assist when requested in evaluating a child or parent with substance abuse, developmental disabilities, or psychiatric problems when children enter into protective services. This will help ensure that families receive necessary treatment before a child is removed from the home.

Department of Public Safety

Director Charles Jackson

The Department of Public Safety reports that juvenile programs have suffered budget cuts locally and nationally. Nationally, \$200 million was shifted from juvenile programs to Homeland Security. The department lost funding for the Local School District Partnership grants, which was a program funded jointly by the state, the local community and the school system. This resulted in the loss of funding for 40 School Resource Officers.

Through funding for Title II grants, Title V, Challenge, the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant and the Local Government School District Partnership grants, the Department was able to award \$7,702,175.27 in grant funding to 146 sub-grantees during the past year. These programs served 55,153 youth. While in these programs 197 received a referral to the juvenile/family court, 38 were committed to the Division of Youth Services and 23 were certified to the court of general jurisdiction.

The production of methamphetamine in Missouri continues to be a problem. The use of methamphetamine has disastrous results for families and children. Stopping the manufacturing and distribution of meth in the state is a priority of the Department. Other areas that are of particular concern to us and that we are currently funding involve: disproportionate minority youth contact with the juvenile justice system, mental health needs of youth in the juvenile justice system, health needs of youth in detention centers, restorative justice, mentoring, truancy court, and other prevention projects.

Department of Social Services

Director Steve Roling

The Department of Social Services has also undergone structural changes. Steve Roling was named the new director for the Department this year. The Division of Family Services and the Child Support Enforcement Division were combined into one division that is called the Family Support Division. Child welfare issues now fall under a new

division called the Children's Division. The Department also established the Office of Early Childhood, which serves as the Department's lead for early childhood issues.

The Future of the Children's Services Commission

The Children's Services Commission will continue to advocate for the children of Missouri during the next year. In addition to initiating and supporting legislation pertaining to children, the Commission will participate in the 22nd Annual Children's Advocacy Day on Tuesday, January 27, 2004. A joint meeting with the Family and Community Trust Board is planned for January. In 2004, the Commission and the FACT board will discuss common issues and goals, and explore possible structural changes that may enhance opportunities to work together.

The Commission is very enthusiastic about the opportunity to support Missouri children by working with the public and private sectors on legislation, policy, and funding issues. In addition to the recommendations contained within the report and included in the appended subcommittee reports, the Commission has identified priority issues to be addressed by the Commission. (A listing of these issues as discussed in the August meeting is included in Appendix E.)

In 2004, the Children's Services Commission will continue its work to improve the lives of Missouri's children.

Report Appendices:

Several items are appended to this report, including full reports of the four subcommittees, the minutes recorded at each of the Commission's 2003 meetings, and informational data that supports reports. They are organized as follows:

- Appendix A: Children's Mental Health Subcommittee Report
- Appendix B: Early Childhood Subcommittee Report
- Appendix C: Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee Report
- Appendix D: Parental Responsibilities Subcommittee Report
- Appendix E: Minutes of 2003 Commission Meetings
- Appendix F: Table: Injuries by Missouri industry to employees under 18